

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0789

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

USUN FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK
SUBJ: RHODESIA: PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S REPLY TO OUR CONFERENCE
PROPOSAL

1. MARK CHONA ASKED BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER ALLINSON
AND ME TO RETURN TO SEE HIM SATURDAY AFTERNOON IN ORDER TO
RECEIVE PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S COMMENTS ON OUR PROPOSAL.
CHONA SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT SUPPORTED OUR CALL FOR A
CONFERENCE ON CONDITION THAT (1) WE COMPLETED THE SECURITY
COUNCIL PROCESS THROUGH ALL ITS STEPS (BY THIS WE ASSUME HE
MEANS THROUGH PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION), (2) THAT IN THE
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COURSE OF IT WE REAFFIRM AGAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ANGLO-
AMERICAN PROPOSAL, AND (3) THAT WE ESTABLISH FIRMLY OUR
POSITION THAT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT COMPLETED IN SALISBURY
WAS "INADEQUATE AS IT NOW STANDS." CHONA SAID THAT ZAMBIA
WOULD CONDEMN IT OUTRIGHT, BUT IT WOULD UNDERSTAND IF WE
CONFINED OURSELVES TO THE STATEMENTS ALREADY MADE BY
PRESIDENT CARTER AND FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN AND IF THE

RESOLUTION CONTAINED WORDING SUCH AS "INADEQUATE AS IT NOW STANDS." HE HAD SEEN OWEN'S MARCH 10 STATEMENT EARLIER AND WAS SATISFIED WITH IT.

2. CHONA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE STARTING POINT OF THE CONFERENCE WOULD BE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL. IF DISCUSSIONS MOVED BEYOND THAT, THE PRESIDENT WANTED IT MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT HE WOULD NOT SUPPORT GREATER CONCESSION TO SMITH. CONA SAID THEY DID NOT INSIST ON THE EXACT PROVISIONS OF THE AAP BUT WOULD NOT CONCEDE MORE THAN IT GAVE.

3. CHONA AGAIN ASKED WHAT WE WOULD DO IF SMITH REFUSED TO ATTEND, AND WE REPEATED THE FORMULA CONTAINED IN THE INSTRUCTIONS; THAT WE SAW THE MEETING AS AN ATTEMPT TO BRIDGE THE TWO SIDES, AND THAT THEREFORE, IF ONE OF THEM DID NOT APPEAR WE WOULD HAVE TO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THINGS BUT THAT WE DID NOT RULE OUT GOING AHEAD. THIS TIME CHONA SEEMED DISAPPOINTED AT THIS RESPONSE AND SAID HE THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE TOO. HE DID NOT GO SO FAR AS TO MAKE A PRIOR COMMITMENT TO GO AHEAD WITH THE CONFERENCE WHETHER OR NOT SMITH ATTENDED A NECESSARY CONDITION TO SUPPORT OF THE CONFERENCE IDEA, BUT HE DID INDICATE THAT HE DID NOT THINK THAT MANY PEOPLE WOULD ACTUALLY BEGIN TRAVEL UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR EITHER THAT SMITH WOULD ATTEND OR THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO GO AHEAD WITH THE CONFERENCE IN HIS ABSENCE. HE
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DID NOT WANT PEOPLE TO TRAVEL THERE ONLY TO FIND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CONFERENCE.

4. CHONA ALSO MENTIONED THAT THE PRESS HAD EXAGGERATED THE NUMBER OF ZAMBIANS KILLED IN THE RHODESIAN RAID. THERE WERE VERY FEW. HE SAID THAT THE ZAMBIANS HAD ACQUITTED THEMSELVES WELL AND THAT THERE WERE TWO RHODESIAN AIRPLANES IN THE RIVER--A HAWKER HUNTER AND A LARGE HELICOPTER.

5. COMMENT: ON THE RAID IT APPEARS THAT THE ZAMBIANS ARE TRYING TO PLAY DOWN THEIR LOSSES AND INVOLVEMENT, PROBABLY IN ORDER TO AVOID STRONG DOMESTIC REACTIONS; EITHER IN FAVOR OF RETALIATION OR IN FAVOR OF WITHDRAWING SUPPORT FOR NKOMO.

6. ON THE CONFERENCE WE FIND A GREAT DEAL OF SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA HERE IN ZAMBIA. IT MAY BE CLUTCHING AT A STRAW FOR MANY BUT THIS STRAW IS AN IMPORTANT ONE. THE PRIME MINISTER AND TWO MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AT A SOCIAL EVENT SATURDAY EVENING UNDERLINED TO ME THEIR HOPES THAT THE CONFERENCE CAN BE PUT TOGETHER AND PRODUCE SOMETHING. PRIME MINISTER MAINZA CHONA SAID HE ASSUMED WE WERE DOING

EVERYTHING WE COULD PRIVATELY TO SEE THAT THE MEETING TAKES
PLACE, AND RATHER FERVENTLY WISHED US LUCK. ZAMBIANS SEEM
TO BE BECOMING LESS AND LESS ENCHANTED WITH THE IDEA OF
BEING LEFT WITH A CHOICE BETWEEN A MILITARY SETTLEMENT AND
THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT.

LOW

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